

Between empathy and victim-blaming: the effect of personal ideologies and identities on users' perception of the self-reported gender-based violence posts on Facebook in Egypt

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Abstract

The advent and proliferation of digital technology, particularly social media, has provided a potential voice to voiceless people. This capacity enables public shaming of sexual perpetrators as evinced via public accusations leveled against celebrities regarding sexual harassment, which resulted in some celebrities losing work and suffering financially. Similar social movements that propagate publicly via social media provide the opportunity to better understand the scope and variance of the issues raised. For example, similar online social movements have focused upon self-disclosure of sexual harassment and assaults, which may assist in correcting these behaviors. More specifically, this process of online self-disclosure may help others to better understand the post-incident trauma and pain, which may result in changing societal norms as it pertains to such behavior. This research aims to examine the perception of users, specifically on Facebook, regarding online self-reporting of gender-based violence in Egypt and the potential mediated variables that affect the perception of these posts.

Introduction

Scholars have debated the impact of gender as it pertains the creation and proliferation of digital technologies. Some scholars argue the Internet is a place created by men, for men. Despite potential anonymity masking these effects, researchers have identified social stigmatization of women and gender inequality in cyberspace, which is manifested in a similar manner to those exhibited offline (Lea, Spears, and DeGroot 2001; Postmes et al. 2001). Conversely, other scholars argue that anonymity on the Internet allows women to freely express themselves, which signifies the creation of a utopian Internet where no discernable difference between genders is evident (Morahan-Martin 2000). Meanwhile, the Arab Spring attracted many researchers who examined the online and digital activities in the region. However, the majority of research dedicated to this topic primarily focused on the online activism and online political participation of Arab women and feminists. As such, this body of research neglects the social usage and impact of the Internet, as well as other socio-economic aspects, as it pertains to women in Egypt.

A recent report published by Statista (Galal 2023a) revealed Egypt has a total of 80.8 million Internet users, which represents nearly 72 percent of the total population (Galal 2023c). Further, Galal (2023b) identified 55.7 million active Facebook users in Egypt. According to research conducted by Dixon (2023), Egypt ranks tenth globally regarding the number of total

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Facebook users per nation. Despite the high penetration rate and increasing number of Egyptian women using the Internet and social media, their online engagement has not empowered women as much as some would believe. Although female activists played a significant role in Egypt's 2011 revolution, they tended to be marginalized during important decision-making processes, which was evident on Facebook pages utilized for organizing protests. Further, this resulted in the majority of revolutionary spokesmen being male (Hassanin 2013).

Considine (2009) pointed to ominous aspects of anonymity and freedom of expression as contributing to online misogyny. There are approximately half a billion webpages dedicated to pornography that often degrade women more often than men, which accounts for approximately seventy percent of total Internet usage. Meanwhile, there is voluminous amount of hateful and discriminatory comments all over YouTube. Despite these realities, information and communication technologies (ICT) have empowered Egyptian women attempting to combat offline harassment via online applications like *Harass Map* among others (Sara 2015). Further, Badran (2010) postulated that ICT had a positive impact regarding female empowerment in Egypt. As such, women living under authoritarian political systems, or cultures dominated by patriarchy, may resist these systems through distinct movements that reside outside of the framework of traditional Western activism. An example of this can be found in both the Egyptian and Tunisian revolutions that occurred in 2011 (Newsom and Lengel 2012). Citizens in both countries utilized ICT to form protective committees in their neighborhoods, as well as for women in the streets to combat harassment and physical violence. This was especially true when police withdrew from the streets during the Egyptian revolution (Newsom and Lengel 2012). As such, social media has manifested a means of resistance for Egyptian women. However, female participation in political resistance and advocating for change—both online and offline—is a direct challenge to cultural and patriarchal norms, as well as political oppression. Despite these realities, female activists continue to use cyberfeminism to reshape and resist gender norms, rules, and laws in society. This form of cyber-activism does not necessarily mean upending the gender system, but it can be described as a change in power and control by altering certain gender roles, norms, and beliefs (Alaoui 2015).

The phenomenon of self-reported gender-based violence (GBV)¹ on social media is rarely examined in media and communication studies, especially in the Middle East and Egypt in particular. As a result of this dearth, this research delves into this relatively new phenomenon in Egypt, which is online non-anonymous self-reported stories of GBV. This research is a comprehensive examination of the perception of users who read online stories of GBV, which includes if they perceive these disclosures as shameful or socially acceptable and whether they plan to post personal GBV experiences on social media in the future. The research also examines the effect of moderated variables on the respondent's exposure to online self-reported GBV and their perception of these stories.

Literature Review

Social media provides the capacity for victims to have the sense of being heard, acknowledged, empowered, and connected through feminist hashtags. Williamson et al. (2020)

¹ GBV refers to gender-based violence with its different forms including emotional violence, domestic violence, sextual harassment, physical violence, economic violence, etc.

argued the sexual assault rate and social tendency of victim-blaming decreased because of the #MeToo social movement. The impact of #MeToo resulted in a corresponding increase of reported assaults to authorities (Williamson et al. 2020). It has been argued that a sense of solidarity, along with the high visibility of the #MeToo movement, changed the perception of bias within the legal system. Before #MeToo, many legal systems were often lenient toward perpetrators of sexual harassment and violence, which inhibited many victims from reporting their cases. As such, social media provided women with the capability to self-disclose their personal stories of sexual harassment and assaults, which enabled a support system for victims and increased gender equality (Williamson et al. 2020).

Gender affiliation, ideologies, and past experiences contribute significantly to the myriad of interpretations involving social interactions among men and women. In certain situations, men may construe their behavior, which would be considered sexual harassment by women, as normal communication. This disparity in understanding points toward the tolerance and acceptance of sexual harassment and victim-blaming. Kunst et al. (2019) argued the differences in underlying ideologies between men and women explain the variation in responses and attitudes towards #MeToo and similar social movements. Moreover, perceptions regarding the efficacy of online activism, particularly as it relates to issues involving women, will directly influence a user's intention to participate in similar activities (Zhou and Qiu 2020). Despite these realities, ICT and social media are essential for creating social networks that provide alternative spaces for gender-related discourse.

Ideas regarding sexism will vary among individuals, including among women and men, which also pertains to stereotypes involving both sexes. Alluding to this variance in understanding, researchers pointed toward two unique forms of sexism, which are hostile sexism and benevolent sexism. Kunst et al. (2019) examined the research pertaining to these two forms of sexism. The results indicated that hostile sexism is exhibited by those who openly demonstrate misogynistic views and hostile attitudes towards women, which includes objectifying women and considering them inferior to men. Researchers also found those who exhibit a high level of hostile sexism tend to accept or normalize sexual harassment and exhibit a high potentiality to engage in sexual assault. Not surprisingly, men display higher levels of hostile sexism than women. Benevolent sexism consists of ostensibly positive, yet often condescending, views toward women. There is no variation between men and women involving the acceptance of benevolent sexism, yet those who display opinions associated with benevolent sexism tend to have nuanced beliefs regarding sexual indecency. More specifically, benevolent sexism holds that traditional women should be protected, but concurrently displays animosity toward non-traditional women. Further, Kunst et al. (2019) found that men who display a greater acceptance of rape myth when compared to women. Rape myth involves downplaying serious detrimental effects of rape, invoking victim-blaming, often dismissing or downplaying allegations of rape, and justifying the actions of the perpetrator. There is a positive correlation between those who believe in rape myth and those who exhibit aggression and engage in sexual misconduct (Kunst et al. 2019).

Delker et al. (2020) conducted an experimental study involving American adults, which explored perceptions regarding trauma stories. The research examined "the degree to which public perceptions of trauma story-telling are shaped by cultural preference for positive endings to stories of adversity, and cultural stigma surrounding sexual violence" (Delker et al. 2020, 1). The researchers postulated a positive relationship exists between just world belief and victim-blaming, which provided a reassuring presumption to those who exhibited a just world belief that close

associates (e.g., friends, family, loved-ones, colleagues, public figures, respected individuals, etc.) cannot be sexual abusers. Notably, the public's recognition of other types of traumas and their effects is significantly greater as opposed to sexual violence traumas (Delker et al. 2020). The findings indicated that sexual trauma stories with negative endings are perceived with high difficulty and thus are less likely to be disclosed. Moreover, there was no correlation between sexual trauma stories with negative endings involving the obligation or burden of sharing with others. As such, stories with negative endings were less likely to be shared and more challenging to tell in comparison to those with positive or redemptive endings (Delker et al. 2020).

Individuals who identify with sociopolitical ideologies, such as feminism, are inclined toward collective action and often engage in movements, like women's rights advocacy. Research has revealed that affiliation with feminist identity correlates with a more favorable perception of the #MeToo movement (Kunst et al. 2019). Participation in specific groups, particularly on social media, prompts story sharing to foster a sense of belonging among members with shared experiences (Zhou and Qiu 2020). ICT and social media provide women the capacity to participate in online alternative public groups, which may promote feminist ideology and increase the probability of engaging in feminist activities. Self-identification with a group identity, like feminism, will often instigate group members to comply with group norms to maintain their status within the group. There is a clear distinction between politicized and social identity, which indicates a political identity defines women as activists striving for social change, while the latter implies mere membership in a gender group within the prevailing culture and power structure (Zhou and Qiu 2020).

Not surprisingly, public perceptions of #MeToo varied among genders as identified by Kende et al (2020). More specifically, women are perceived as collective victims, which implicitly pointed toward men as collective perpetrators. This is reflected by both male and female internal cognitive self-classification to in-groups, which is predicated on gender. Further, needs related to power and morality for both women and men, which are related to a propensity to maintain or change the status quo, affected perceptions of #MeToo (Kende et al. 2020). Group affiliation, whether involving advantaged or disadvantaged groups, shapes the dynamics of empowerment, engagement in social movements, morality, and attitudes toward social change. The perpetrator group, which is typically composed of males, tend to rejuvenate their group's moral identity in response to sexual accusations, which is a threat to the group's moral reputation. The result for this behavior will manifest either as an admission of guilt and an expressed desire to behave more morally in the future or by defending in-group reputation without altering moral attitudes and behaviors (Kende et al. 2020). Any perceived gender discrimination amplifies a need for power as gender system justification influences how men respond to actions of in-group members. Men with high gender system justification show less shame toward in-group moral actions and often defend such actions because the discussion of gender equality is perceived as a status threat. Women who exhibit low gender system justification and a sense of injustice regarding their in-group are more likely to perceive #MeToo as empowering, while men with low gender system justification are inclined to view it as a chance for moral improvement. Accordingly, the perception of #MeToo as either an opportunity for empowerment or a moral opportunity differ based on perceived social roles within victims' or perpetrators' groups (Kende et al. 2020).

Gender plays a significant role in shaping attitudes toward sexual harassment and movements like #MeToo. Women tend to hold positive views regarding #MeToo as women are more likely to be victims of sexual violence. Conversely, while men are often associated with

perpetrators of sexual violence they often defend the in-group and perceive #MeToo as harmful to their image. Interestingly, there is a correlation regarding the frequency and type of pornography consumed, which can influence male attitudes toward women, sexual violence, and #MeToo (Kunst et al. 2019). Considering that women are often victims of sexual violence, their coping strategies often derive from anger due to gender discrimination and perceived inequality, which can lead to collective action (Zhou and Qiu, 2020). The actions of an emotional feminist collective are fueled by affective solidarity and support, which aim to address societal issues like the normalization of rape culture and victim-blaming (Zhou and Qiu, 2020).

Although personal experience with sexual harassment and sexual assault play an important role in comprehending the phenomena, some users depend on other sources to form their understanding without previous experience (Williamson et al. 2020). Not surprisingly, men are more often preparators of sexual harassment as compared to women. Meanwhile, women self-reported as victims of sexual harassment more frequently than men or indicated they knew of relatives and peers who were victimized. As such, women displayed a higher level of feminist identification, a lower level of sexism, and less inclination toward rape myth acceptance juxtaposed to men. Moreover, women are more likely to exhibit a positive response toward #MeToo when compared to men. The ideologies (e.g., sexism, rape myth, feminist identity, and just world belief) an individual accepts and previous experience with sexual harassment or sexual assaults—either as victims or perpetrators—tend to be effective indicators regarding an individuals response and perception of #MeToo (Kunst et al. 2019).

Williamson et al. (2020) conducted a focus group with Canadian undergraduate students to examine their perceptions regarding #MeToo. The participants highlighted the following benefits of the #MeToo movement. First, the movement attracts high visibility and public attention regarding sexual harassment and increases awareness of the phenomenon in society. This perception is understandably nuanced. More specifically, such social movements clarify the difference between sexual consent and assaults, which provides a deeper understanding of the phenomena and need for change. It also helped to reduce social stigmatization and victim-blaming tendencies, as well as augmenting comprehension regarding how to deal with unreported sexual harassment cases. Second, #MeToo encouraged other women to come forward and disclose their personal stories regarding sexual harassment and assaults. Finally, participants acknowledged a positive effect involving the movement's endorsement by celebrities, which correspondingly increased the visibility and participation in the movement. Further, such endorsements aided in changing stereotyped coverage of sexual harassment in mainstream media, which usually adopted a victim-blaming narrative. This further helped to enforce more serious sanctions involving preparators of sexual violence.

Conversely, participants pointed to three distinct disadvantages of #MeToo. First, individuals who are not on social media are unable to disclose their sexual harassment stories. They also questioned the credibility of sexual harassment stories due to anonymity on social media, which enables anyone to propagate false allegations. Second, participants generally displayed concern regarding false accusations and the long-lasting impact upon those who are innocent. As such, men tended to distrust the verification mechanism involving accusations of sexual assault broadcast on social media as they are more likely to be accused in #MeToo discussions. Further, the more recent accusations of sexual harassment are perceived as more credible juxtaposed to incidents that occurred long ago. There was also apprehension regarding the #MeToo movement focusing on women only, which lends itself to a stereotype of sexual harassment where women are

victims and men are abusers. This may prevent men from sharing their personal stories of sexual harassment out of fear of embarrassment, sarcasm, or perceived falsification. Finally, the #MeToo movement generated superficial change, but nothing significant or continuous. Meanwhile, respondents indicated that genuine societal change tends to be slow and incremental. As such, additional corrective measures are needed to holistically address sexual violence in society (Williamson et al., 2020).

In light of the insights gained from the literature review, this study aims to explore the correlation between exposure to self-reported narratives involving GBV on social media and individual perceptions regarding this phenomenon. Additionally, the research incorporates and examines mediating variables, which include individual ideologies, identity, and demographic factors.

Theoretical Framework

Cyberfeminism is an evolution of post-feminism that emerged due to the presence of women in cyberspace and ICT, which provided new avenues for activism that were previously unavailable to earlier feminists (Wilding 1998; Fernández 2003; Paasonen 2011). Today's generation, unable to engage in traditional offline activism, bridges the gap between real-life experiences of sexism and activism by sharing these experiences on social media and participating in consciousness-raising groups (Blevins 2018). The different waves of feminism have been marked by shifts in communication tools and ideologies. More specifically, the third wave expanded beyond political and financial empowerment to address social aspects, which included objectification and stereotyping (Wilding 1998). Using the word *waves* to describe iterations of feminist history is not only describing different generations of feminism, but also huge differences in communication tools as well as political and ideological systems. The word *wave* indicates the emergence of a new type of feminism that merged with old versions of feminism. Although feminists from different generations often share many of the same interests and commitment regarding issues pertaining to gender, they do not share the same communication practices. For example, the phenomenon of digital feminism and online feminist groups is relatively new due to the emergence of digitally experienced feminists and other political changes that were nonexistent during the initial waves of feminism (Jouët 2018).

Consequently, Wilding (1998) pointed to the advent of the Internet and ICT, which evolved after the first three waves of feminism, as providing women with three distinct advantages. First, the proliferation of the Internet eliminated the need for physical presence of women to organize or discuss issues related to women. Second, the Internet has impacted public opinion and provided the capacity to form public groups, which provides the opportunity for women to be heard and to discuss women-related issues that may be publicly prohibited or considered taboo in some cultural traditions. Third, the Internet empowers women through content creation, participation in shaping public opinion, and documentation of the assaults against women.

Meanwhile, scholars consider feminist studies typically belonging in one of two unique categories. The first category examines the differences between the waves of feminism, while the second category explores the differences between academic-related feminism and activist-

based feminism.

The waves of feminism that evolved out of Western tradition often refer to the different generations of feminism. The first wave of feminism began in the 1910s and 1920s, which advocated for the political inclusion of women. The second wave of feminism occurred from the 1960s through the 1980s, which advocated for additional social rights for women. The third wave of feminism transpired from the 1990s to the 2000s, which focused more on concentrated and specialized goals.

One academic deficiency among some feminist scholars is the tendency to focus upon the achievements of past waves of feminism while concurrently remaining skeptical regarding the ability of current feminists to enact similar actual change (Blevins 2018). As digital media is widely considered a main contributor to the revival of feminism and women's empowerment, many questions have been raised regarding the changes emerging from this revival. More specifically, how does digital media change or renew the nature of feminism? Moreover, how does digital media limit or enhance the capabilities of contemporary feminists as opposed to historical feminists? Further, does excessive usage or reliance upon social media limit or enhance the visibility of feminism? Lastly, does the integration of social media into modern feminism affect the feminist discourse (Jouët 2018)?

Regarding the mediated intersection between feminism and media communication from a theoretical perspective, Byerly (2018) emphasizes the need to redefine this mediated intersection as it shapes public discourse, which impact perceptions regarding gender identity and society.

The inclusion of feminism in relation to media and communication theories originated in the 1970s, which were in response to the women's liberation movement. Early feminist scholars examined the representation, or lack thereof, of women in media. Moreover, Tuchman (1978) posited a link between the low visibility of women in media and limited civic engagement. Although there have been numerous attempts, a clear definition of feminist communication theory remains elusive. Scholars generally agree that feminist communication theory comprises assumptions explaining phenomena related to women and communication, which tend to emphasize the existence of women, power usage, and agency (Byerly 2018).

Cucklanz (2016) advocates for extending feminist communication theory beyond simply the agency and power women by incorporating other textual features, which include race, gender, ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, culture, and religion. Rakow and Wackwitz (2004) define feminist communication theory via the categories of *difference*, *voice*, and *representation*, which creates a framework for comprehending, initiating social change, recognizing sexism, and sharing experiences. First, *difference* is the capacity to recognize diverse communication styles. Second, *voice* addresses the ability to speak out and be socially

and politically recognized. Third, *representation* critiques the misleading portrayal of women in media. They argue for a transformative and political approach, which emphasizes the need to challenge and change conceptual structures rooted in the daily experiences of women. The theory is polyvocal, which accommodates various perspectives and voices. As such, they reject binary gender classifications and advocate for feminist communication that tolerates diverse identities. Byerly (2018) aligns with this assertion, by advocating for feminist communication theory to foster critical thinking and social change, which can influence new social relations and alter existing social structures.

In recent years, there has been a significant resurgence of interest in research involving gender and media, which signifies just how critical this field of knowledge is to academia (Buonanno, 2014). However, Byerly (2018) indicated that regardless of the effort of feminist scholars in developing different theories of communication, they did not name them or provide scientific methods for validation. In addition, she mentioned that few studies had adopted a statistical quantitative approach to explain gender power in relation to media. The comparative longitudinal project conducted by Djerff-Pierre (2011) revealed a low representation of women in news media throughout the years and postulated how this is reflected in and effects society. The study points to the power of media to affect change in society, particularly as it relates to gender. Byerly (2018) advocates for expanding upon existing theories in feminist communication as essential to future research. Despite progress regarding feminist communication theories, there is a need to continually consider the circumstances and time-period the theory was hypothesized due to technological advances, among other issues. Yet, it can be reasonably argued the existence of women in the global media system is predominantly controlled by men and there is all too often a language of silence among women.

Research Hypotheses

- **H1:** There is a positive correlation between the exposure to GBV self-reported stories on Facebook and a user's perception of GBV self-reposted stories on Facebook.
- **H2:** An individual's ideologies (e.g., hostile sexism, benevolent sexism, just world belief, and perceived injustice) will affect the relation between exposure to GBV self-reported stories on Facebook and the user's perception of GBV self-reposted stories on Facebook.
- **H3:** The user's identity (e.g., group identity, feminism identity, and politicized identity), will affect the relation between the exposure to GBV self-reported stories on Facebook and the user's perception of GBV self-reposted stories on Facebook.
- **H4:** Demographic differences (e.g., age, gender, education, and income) will affect the relation between the exposure to GBV self-reported stories on Facebook and the user's perception of GBV self-reposted stories on Facebook.

Measures

1. Independent Variables

The independent variable is the exposure to online GBV self-reported stories on Facebook. Participants will be asked regarding their usage of Internet. More specifically, they will be asked regarding their duration of Internet usage, the amount of exposure to social media, and their most used social media platform. Further, they will be asked whether they have read personal confessions of GBV on social media, the format of those posts, and the type of GBV most often described when reading GBV stories online (Zhou and Qiu 2020).

2. *Intervening Variables*

2.1 *Users' Identity:*

Self-identification as a feminist or to any group identity, which is defined as membership to a certain group, will compel group members to comply with the social norms as well as have a personal interest in maintaining or improving the group status. For the purposes of this study, politicized identity, which differs from social identity, refers to women who are feminist activists who use the Internet to advocate for social change, particularly as it relates to female rights and political agency. On the other hand, social identity refers to the membership of women in a social gender group that exists within a male dominant culture (Zhou and Qiu 2020).

Group affiliation to either advantaged or disadvantaged groups will affect the need for empowerment and involvement in a social movement or the need for morality and social change. The perpetrator group, which is typically composed of males, tends to revitalize their group's moral identity in response to sexual accusations, which is a threat to the group's moral reputation (Kende et al. 2020).

2.1.1 *Group Identity*

The research adopted Levonian Morgan's (1996) scale to measure *sisterhood*, which will be used to measure the affiliation of participants to gender groups (e.g., "Women especially need legislation to preserve their rights" and "we should band together to fight for those rights").

2.1.2 *Self-identification as Feminist and Attitude Towards Feminism:*

Introduced by Szymanski (2004), this study uses the items from the self-identification as feminist inventory Likert scale. This was used to examine the level of agreement with the following queries: whether they identify themselves as feminist, whether they introduce themselves as feminist to others, I admire and hold the ideals of feminists in high regard, and I agree with the objectives of feminist movements. In addition, attitudes toward feminism and women's movement scale, which was introduced by Fassinger (1994), was used to examine the following statements: women should be given the same consideration as males when running for high-level governmental jobs, equal chances should be given to men and women, gender equality in the workplace should be assured, women should be treated with more respect than they already are, gender equality is a major social objective, everyone finds gender stereotypes to be bothersome, and regardless of social gender norms, all genders should be able to make their own decisions.

2.1.3 Politicized Identity:

The perceptions of participants regarding the contributions of online feminist activists to women's issues will be evaluated through the following statements: Overall, online feminists didn't do much to improve the status of women; they mostly just advocated for themselves (Kunst et al. 2019).

2.2 Individual Ideologies

2.2.1 Hostile and Benevolent Sexism:

Hostile sexism involves misogynic views and attitudes toward women as well as the objectification of women as sexually inferior. Benevolent sexism involves the concept that powerless women need protection (Kunst et al. 2019). This will be measured through selected items from the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick and Fiske 1996) via a Likert scale. Hostile sexism is measured through responses to the following phrases: women are easily offended, women desire greater privilege under the guise of equality, women strive for greater authority than males, and women typically do not appreciate the good deeds done for them by men. The benevolent sexism will be measured through responses to the following phrases: women need to be saved first in times of tragedy and men should protect and nurture women.

2.2.2 Just World Belief:

Just world is the belief that individuals get what they deserve based on their actions. Individuals who exhibit a high level of just world belief usually blame rape victims because, according to their belief, the victims got what they deserve (Kunst et al. 2019). Selected items from Dalbert's (1999) just world inventory will be measured via Likert scale to measure the response to the following statements: I consider the world to be a just place; I think that everyone receives what they merit; I firmly think that justice always triumphs over or displaces injustice; I believe that in a long-term people will be compensated for injustice; In my opinion, unfairness is the exception rather than the rule in all facets of life; I believe that while making decisions, people look to fairness; and I believe it is critical to draw attention to unfairness throughout time.

2.2.3 Perceived Injustice of Sexual Harassment Act:

Perception of injustice and shared anger among gender group members creates a collective identity among group members. However, changing the status quo is not a unified goal among all group members. As it relates to the members who uphold the status quo, despite the suffering of in-group members they defend the status quo for the sake of maintaining supposed harmony between the two gender groups, which results in their justifying the existing system (Kende et al. 2020). The participants will be asked regarding their perception of the injustice suffered by victims of sexual harassment, abuse, or gender violence. This will be investigated via the following three statements: it is unfair that those who have been harassed experience victimization and slut-shaming; some businesses purposely fail to discipline sexual harassers, which is unacceptable; and when sexual harassment occurs, I get irritated that the victims are discouraged from requesting their rights (Zhou and Qiu 2020).

2.3 Demographic Variables:

The participants will be asked regarding their age, gender, education, and income level. The question of age will be open-ended, while the educational level is divided into five categories, which are: under-graduate students, bachelor's degree holders, master's holder, PhD holder, and others. The level of monthly income includes four options, which are: less than 3000 pounds, from 3000 to less than 8000 pounds, from 8000 to less than 15000 pounds, and more than 15000 pounds.

3 Dependent Variables:

The dependent variable is the perception of online self-disclosed stories of GBV, which will be categorized into the following groups outlined in sections 3.1 And 3.2.

3.1 The Perceived Benefits:

Participants will provide their level of agreement with potential benefits of self-disclosure online through their responses to the following phrases: I think online self-disclosure helps to shed light on gender-based violence problem; it helps to clarify the magnitude of phenomena; and it gives voice to voiceless people (Kunst et al. 2019; Zhou and Qiu 2020).

3.2 The Perceived Harms:

Participants provide their level of agreement with potential harm of self-disclosure online, which includes false accusations, lasting negative effects on innocent individuals who are publicly shamed as preparators, wrongfully labelling a lot of people as sexual assaulters, and the exaggeration of social interaction as sexual harassment (Kunst, et al. 2019; Zhou and Qiu, 2020).

Sampling Process:

A questionnaire was distributed online using a convenient non-random sampling technique by accessing readily available online users who agreed and consented to participate in the survey. The online consent used by this research guarantees the confidentiality of respondents, the information shared by respondents, and that no harm or discomfort will be caused by answering the questions. The purpose of the questionnaire was described to respondents as a survey to examine their perceptions of online Facebook posts. Two versions of the questionnaire were created as one was in Arabic and the other in English. They were distributed on Facebook through online groups or personal pages. A pilot study was conducted before distributing the actual questionnaire, which resulted in amending certain questions. The online responses were collected for a full month, which ranged from mid-November 2022 until mid-December 2022. The survey garnered 330 respondents. However, sixteen responses were removed from the sample because they were either incomplete or instructions were incorrectly followed. From the below table, the number of female respondents exceeds the number of male respondents, which constituted 63.9 percent and 36.1 percent of the respondents respectively. More than half of the total respondents have a bachelor's degree, which represents 56.6 percent of the sample. Meanwhile, almost thirty percent of respondents are undergraduate students. The largest group among respondents to the monthly income level question were in the less than 3000 EGP category, which constitutes 32.3

percent of the sample. This was followed by the responses of from 3000 to less than 8000 EGP and from 8000 to less than 15000 EGP, which constitutes 30.1 and 29.4 percent of the sample respectively. Regarding age, almost half of the respondents were aged twenty-five to less than thirty-five years old, which represents 46.2 percent (n = 146) of the sample. Respondents who are less than 25 years old constitutes 44 percent of the sample (n = 139). Only 9.8 percent of the sample were aged 35 years or older (n = 31).

Statistical Procedures

The Pearson's correlation coefficient test was conducted to examine the correlation between the dependent and independent variables. As the following table illustrates, there is a statistically significant positive correlation with a p-value <0.05 between exposure to self-reported GBV stories on Facebook and the user's overall perception of self-reported GBV stories on Facebook.

Results - Testing Hypotheses

Models Related to the Perceived Benefits of the Self-reported GBV Stories on Facebook

In the first model, the single independent variable is the exposure to self-reported GBV stories on Facebook. The single dependent variable is the perceived benefits of self-reported GBV stories on Facebook. The following table shows the coefficients of the regression model. The coefficients depict a confidence rate of 95 percent. The perceived benefits of self-reported GBV stories on Facebook will increase by 5.71 when the value of exposure to self-reported GBV stories on Facebook increases by one unit, while holding other variables constant.

Table 1: Coefficients of Model One Related to the Perceived Benefits of the Self-reported GBV Stories on Facebook.

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	4.100	.107		38.203	.000
Exposure to GBV stories	5.710	.133	.924	42.885	.000

In the second model there is one independent variable, which is the exposure to self-reported GBV stories on Facebook. There is one dependent variable, which is the perceived benefits of self-reported GBV stories on Facebook. Additionally, there is one moderator, which is individual ideologies with their four sub-categories (e.g., hostile sexism, benevolent sexism, the belief in a just world, and the perceived injustice of sexual harassment).

Table 2 reveals the coefficients of the regression model. These coefficients demonstrate a confidence rate of 95 percent.

The perceived benefits of self-reported GBV stories on Facebook will increase by 0.548 when the value of exposure to GBV self-reported stories increases by one unit for all high values of moderators. For low hostile sexism, the effect is negative (-0.04496). This indicates that perceived benefits of self-reported GBV stories on Facebook will decrease by 0.04496 when the value of exposure to self-reported GBV stories on Facebook increases by one unit for low hostile sexism, while holding other variables constant. This signifies that hostile sexism strengthens the relationship between the perceived benefits of self-reported GBV stories on Facebook and

exposure to self-reported GBV stories on Facebook. In contrast, for low benevolent sexism, the effect is positive = 0.193. As such, perceived benefits of self-reported GBV stories on Facebook will increase by 0.193 when the value of exposure to self-reported GBV stories on Facebook increases by one unit, while holding other variables constant. This infers that benevolent sexism strengthens the relationship between the perceived benefits of self-reported GBV stories on Facebook and exposure to self-reported GBV stories on Facebook.

For low just world belief, the effect is positive = 0.448. More specifically, the perceived benefits of self-reported GBV stories on Facebook will increase by 0.448 when the value of exposure to self-reported GBV stories on Facebook increases by one unit for low just world belief, while holding other variables constant. This indicates that just-world belief strengthens the relationship between the perceived benefits of self-reported GBV stories on Facebook and exposure to self-reported GBV stories on Facebook. Similarly, for low perceived injustice of sexual harassment, the effect is positive = 0.512. Further, the perceived benefits of self-reported GBV stories on Facebook will increase by 0.512 when the value of exposure to self-reported GBV stories on Facebook increases by one unit for low perceived injustice of sexual harassment, while holding other variables constant. This suggests the perceived injustice of sexual harassment strengthens the relationship between perceived benefits of self-reported GBV stories on Facebook and exposure to self-reported GBV stories on Facebook.

Table 2: Coefficients of Model Two Related to the Perceived Benefits of the Self-reported GBV Stories on Facebook.

Parameter	B	Std. Error	T	Sig.
Intercept	3.770	.176	21.386	.000
Exposure to GBV	.548	.111	4.951	.000
[Hostile sexism=low]	.827	.107	7.700	.000
[Benevolent sexism=low]	.032	.010	3.190	.000
[Belief=low]	-.060	.018	-3.341	.000
[Perceived injustice=low]	-.429	.082	-5.204	.000
[Hostile sexism=low] * Exposure to GBV	-.593	.115	-5.171	.000
[Benevolent sexism=low] * Exposure to GBV	-.355	.081	-4.377	.000
[Belief=low] * Exposure to GBV	-.100	.030	-3.377	.000
[Perceived injustice=low] * Exposure to GBV	-.035	.011	-3.118	.000

In the third model there is one independent variable, which is exposure to self-reported GBV stories on Facebook. There is one dependent variable, which is perceived benefits of self-reported GBV stories on Facebook. Concurrently, there are four moderators, which are sub-categories of individual identity: self-identification as a feminist, attitude towards feminism, politicized identity, and sisterhood.

The following table displays the coefficients of the regression model. These coefficients demonstrate a confidence rate of 95 percent.

The perceived benefits of self-reported GBV stories on Facebook increases by 0.09 when the value of exposure to self-reported GBV stories on Facebook increases by one unit for all high

values of moderators. For low self-identification as feminist, the effect is negative = -0.19. As a result, the perceived benefits of self-reported GBV stories on Facebook will decrease by 0.19 when the value of exposure to self-reported GBV stories on Facebook increases by one unit for low self-identification as feminist, while holding other variables constant. This indicates that self-identification as a feminist strengthens the relationship between perceived benefits of self-reported GBV stories on Facebook and exposure to self-reported GBV stories on Facebook.

For low attitudes towards feminism, the effect is positive (= 0.26). As such, the perceived benefits of self-reported GBV stories on Facebook increases by 0.26 when the value of exposure to self-reported GBV stories on Facebook increases by one unit for low attitudes towards feminism, while holding other variables constant. This implies that attitudes toward feminism weaken the relationship between perceived benefits and exposure to self-reported GBV stories on Facebook.

For low politicized identity, the effect is negative (= -0.18). Correspondingly, the perceived benefits of self-reported GBV stories on Facebook will decrease by 0.18 when the value of exposure to self-reported GBV stories on Facebook increases by one unit, while holding other variables constant. This indicates that politicized identity strengthens the relationship between perceived benefits and exposure to self-reported GBV stories on Facebook.

For low sisterhood, the effect is positive (= 0.496). Subsequently, the perceived benefits of self-reported GBV stories on Facebook will increase by 0.496 when the value of exposure to self-reported GBV stories on Facebook increases by one unit for low sisterhood, while holding other variables constant. This indicates that sisterhood weakens the relationship between perceived benefits and exposure to self-reported GBV stories on Facebook.

Table 3: Coefficients of Model Three Related to the Perceived Benefits of the Self-reported GBV Stories on Facebook.

Parameter	B	Std. Error	t	Sig.
Intercept	4.437	.205	21.625	.000
Exposure to GBV stories	.090	.028	3.282	.000
[Self-identification as feminist= low]	.034	.011	3.183	.000
[Attitude towards feminism=low]	-.290	.063	-4.614	.000
[Politicized identity=low]	.281	.063	4.437	.000
[Sisterhood scale=low]	-.447	.079	-5.680	.000
[Self-identification as feminism=low] * Exposure to GBV stories	-.280	.071	-3.969	.000
[Attitude towards feminism =low] * Exposure to GBV stories	.175	.048	3.621	.000
[Politicized identity=low] * Exposure to GBV stories	-.273	.070	-3.900	.000
[Sisterhood scale=low] * Exposure to GBV stories	.407	.089	4.547	.000

In the eighth model, there is one independent variable, which is exposure to self-reported GBV stories on Facebook. There is one dependent variable, which is perceived benefits of self-reported GBV stories on Facebook. There are four moderators, which are the demographic variables: age, gender, income, and education.

The following table shows the coefficients of the regression model. These coefficients demonstrate a confidence rate of 95 percent.

The perceived benefits of self-reported GBV stories on Facebook was higher in females respondents than among males by 1.082. The average perceived benefits of self-reported GBV stories on Facebook for those aged less than twenty-seven, juxtaposed to respondents older than twenty-seven, was higher by 0.694. The perceived benefits of self-reported GBV stories on Facebook will increase by 0.526 when the value of exposure to self-reported GBV stories on Facebook increases by one unit for all categories of demographic variables. This implies that all demographic variables do not moderate the relationship between perceived benefits of self-reported GBV stories on Facebook and exposure to self-reported GBV stories on Facebook.

Table 4: Coefficients of Model Eight Related to the Perceived Benefits of the Self-reported GBV Stories on Facebook.

Parameter	B	Std. Error	t	Sig.
Intercept	5.118	.392	13.066	.000
Exposure to GBV stories	.526	.107	4.906	.366
[What is your gender=Female]	1.082	.212	5.094	.000
[age= less than 27]	.694	.216	3.219	.001
[education= undergraduate]	.077	.237	.323	.747
[Incomeless than 8000]	.246	.209	1.176	.240
[What is your gender=Female]* Exposure to GBV stories	.408	.307	1.328	.185
[age= less than 27]* Exposure to GBV stories	.509	.346	1.471	.142
[education= undergraduate] * Exposure to GBV stories	-.042	.348	-.120	.904
[Incomeless than 8000] * Exposure to GBV stories	-.349	.339	-1.031	.303

Models Related to the Perceived Harms of the Self-reported GBV Stories on Facebook

In the first model, there is one independent variable, which is exposure to self-reported GBV stories on Facebook. There is one dependent variable, which is the perceived harms of self-reported GBV stories on Facebook.

The following table reveals the coefficients of the regression model. These coefficients demonstrate a confidence rate of 95 percent. The perceived harms of self-reported GBV stories on Facebook will increase by 4.4 when the value of exposure to self-reported GBV stories on Facebook increases by one unit, while holding other variables constant.

Table 5: Coefficients of Model One Related to the Perceived Harms of the Self-reported GBV Stories on Facebook.

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.99	.112		35.625	.000
Exposure to GBV	4.401	.112	.911	39.204	.000

In the second model, there is one independent variable, which is exposure to self-reported GBV stories on Facebook. There is one dependent variable, which is the perceived harms of self-reported GBV stories on Facebook. Further, there is one moderator, which is individual ideologies within the four sub-categories.

The following table shows the coefficients of the regression model. These coefficients demonstrate a confidence rate of 95 percent.

The perceived harms of self-reported GBV stories on Facebook will decrease by 0.651 when the value of exposure to self-reported GBV stories on Facebook increases by one unit for all high values of moderators. For low hostile sexism, the effect is negative ($= -0.319$). Accordingly, the perceived harms of self-reported GBV stories on Facebook will decrease by 0.319 when the value of the exposure to self-reported GBV stories on Facebook increases by one unit, while holding other variables constant. This indicates that hostile sexism weakens the relationship between the perceived harms of self-reported GBV stories on Facebook and exposure to self-reported GBV stories on Facebook.

For low benevolent sexism, the effect is negative ($= -0.502$). As such, the perceived harm of self-reported GBV stories on Facebook will decrease by 0.502 when the value of exposure to self-reported GBV stories on Facebook increases by one unit, while holding other variables constant. This indicates that benevolent sexism weakens the relationship between perceived harms of self-reported GBV stories on Facebook and exposure to self-reported GBV stories on Facebook.

For low just world belief, the effect is negative ($= -0.175$). This implies that perceived harms of self-reported GBV stories on Facebook will decrease by 0.175 when the value of exposure to self-reported GBV stories on Facebook increases by one unit for low just world belief, while holding other variables constant. This indicates that just world belief weakens the relationship between perceived harms of self-reported GBV stories on Facebook and exposure to self-reported GBV stories on Facebook.

For low perceived injustice of sexual harassment, the effect is positive ($= 0.29$). As a result, the perceived harms of self-reported GBV stories on Facebook will increase by 0.29 when the value of exposure to self-reported GBV stories on Facebook increases by one unit for low belief, while holding other variables constant. This confirms that perceived injustice of sexual harassment weakens the relationship between perceived harms of self-reported GBV stories on Facebook and exposure to self-reported GBV stories on Facebook.

Table 6: Coefficients of Model Two Related to the Perceived Harms of the Self-reported GBV Stories on Facebook.

Parameter	B	Std. Error	t	Sig.
Intercept	3.845	.214	17.952	.000
Exposure to GBV stories	-.651	.341	-4.907	.000
[Hostile sexism=low]	-1.255	.214	-8.873	.000
[Benevolent sexism=low]	.078	.204	3.381	.000
[just world belief=low]	-.106	.212	-3.497	.000
[perceived injustice of SH=low]	-.562	.237	-5.376	.000
[Hostile sexism=low] * Exposure to GBV stories	.332	.332	3.999	.000

[Benevolent sexism=low] * Exposure to GBV stories	.149	.313	3.475	.000
[just world belief=low] * Exposure to GBV stories	.476	.321	4.480	.000
[perceived injustice of SH=low] * Exposure to GBV stories	.943	.363	5.596	.000

In the third model, there is one independent variable, which is exposure to GBV self-reported stories. There is one dependent variable, which is the perceived harms of the self-reported GBV stories on Facebook. Additionally, there are four moderators, which are sub-categories of individual identity: self-identification as a feminist, attitude towards feminism, politicized identity, and group identity or sisterhood.

The following table displays the coefficients of the regression model. These coefficients demonstrate a confidence rate of 95 percent.

The average of perceived harms of self-reported GBV stories on Facebook for those respondents who had a low self-identification as feminist was higher by 0.395 when compared to those who exhibited a high self-identification as feminist. Meanwhile, the average of perceived harms of self-reported GBV stories on Facebook for those respondents exhibiting a low attitude towards feminism was lower by 0.396 when compared to those who exhibited a high attitude towards feminism. Meanwhile, the average of the perceived harms of self-reported GBV stories on Facebook for low-politicized identities is lower by 0.047 when compared to high-politicized identities. The average of the perceived harms of the self-reported GBV stories on Facebook for low sisterhood is higher by 0.432 when compared to high sisterhood. The perceived harms of the self-reported GBV stories on Facebook increased by 0.044 when the value of exposure to self-reported GBV stories on Facebook increases by one unit for all high and low values of moderators. This indicates that all sub-categories of identity do not moderate the relationship between perceived harms of self-reported GBV stories on Facebook and exposure to self-reported GBV stories on Facebook.

Table 7: Coefficients of Model Three Related to the Perceived Harms of the Self-reported GBV Stories on Facebook.

Parameter	B	Std. Error	t	Sig.
Intercept	2.612	.301	8.668	.000
Exposure to GBV stories	.044	.011	4.093	.000
[Self-identification as feminist= low]	.395	.072	5.456	.000
[Attitude towards feminism=low]	-.396	.072	-5.500	.000
[Politicized identity=low]	-.047	.011	-4.163	.000
[Sisterhood scale=low]	.432	.075	5.766	.000
[Self-identification as feminist=low] * Exposure to GBV stories	-.446	.425	-1.049	.295
[Attitude towards feminism=low] * Exposure to GBV stories	.395	.415	.953	.342
[Politicized identity=low] * Exposure to GBV stories	-.057	.446	-.127	.899
[Sisterhood scale=low] * Exposure to GBV stories	-.445	.386	-1.153	.251

In the eighth model, there is one independent variable, which is exposure to self-reported GBV stories on Facebook. There is one dependent variable, which is the perceived harms of self-

reported GBV stories on Facebook. Further, there are four moderators, which are demographic variables: age, gender, income, and education.

The following table shows the coefficients of the regression model. These coefficients demonstrate a confidence rate of 95 percent.

The average of the perceived harms of self-reported GBV stories on Facebook for females is less than the same average for males by 1.386. The perceived harm of self-reported GBV stories on Facebook will increase by 0.273 when the value of exposure to self-reported GBV stories on Facebook increases by one unit for all categories of demographic variables. This indicates that all demographic variables do not moderate the relationship between users perceived harms from self-reported GBV stories on Facebook and exposure to self-reported GBV stories on Facebook.

Table 8: Coefficients of Model Eight Related to the Perceived Harms of the Self-reported GBV Stories on Facebook.

Parameter	B	Std. Error	t	Sig.
Intercept	4.142	.253	16.369	.000
Exposure to GBV stories	.273	.058	4.742	.000
[What is your gender=Female]	-1.386	.266	-5.202	.000
[age= less than 27]	-.146	.270	-.541	.589
[education= undergraduate]	-.339	.298	-1.139	.256
[Incomeless than 8000]	.197	.262	.751	.453
[What is your gender=Female] * Exposure to GBV stories	.307	.385	.798	.425
[age= less than 27] * Exposure to GBV stories	.020	.434	.045	.964
[education= undergraduate] * Exposure to GBV stories	.364	.436	.834	.405

Discussion

The findings of the online questionnaire reveal that a majority of the GBV self-disclosure posts viewed by respondents were text-based posts with media or videos of victims retelling their story. In addition, domestic violence and sexual violence are the two most prevalent forms of GBV that respondents encountered when reading GBV self-disclosure posts on Facebook. According to Bouhlila's (2019) report on domestic violence and sexual harassment in the region, Egypt surpasses the entire Middle East in terms of overall rates of sexual harassment. In the report, forty-two percent of Egyptian respondents indicated they recently experienced verbal harassment and roughly thirty percent reported physical harassment. Moreover, twenty-three percent of Egyptian respondents indicate they personally experienced domestic violence recently and that roughly fifty percent of respondents indicated one of their family members had previously experienced domestic violence. Worse still, Egypt experiences the third highest rate of domestic violence in the Middle East (Bouhlila 2019). Similar findings were revealed in a UN Women report (2017) that surveyed gender equality, which focused on masculinity in the Middle East. More specifically, the report indicated that more than eighty percent of men in Egypt admitted to practicing emotional abuse against their wives during their marriage and just over fifty percent were physically violent in the past year. Moreover, nearly ninety percent of the male respondents indicated that Egyptian women should accept physical violence from their husband for the sake of maintaining familial cohesion.

Additionally, nearly twenty percent of Egyptian men acknowledged using economic violence against their wives. Sadly, the report revealed a gulf of comprehension between the male respondent's perception, juxtaposed to the female respondent's experience, regarding sexual violence. More specifically, during their lives almost one percent of Egyptian men admitted to engaging in this behavior, while over sixteen percent of Egyptian women had experienced sexual violence (UN Women 2017).

Meanwhile, the respondents in this research believe the phenomenon of disclosing personal experiences of GBV on Facebook elicits a more positive impact, compared to a negative impact, on Egyptian society as it provides minorities with a platform to discuss and raise awareness regarding GBV. On the other hand, respondents also indicated that social media easily facilitates the propagation of false accusations and permanent public disgrace for innocent individuals accused of committing acts of GBV. The exposure to GBV self-disclosure stories on Facebook is positively correlated to the perceived benefits of those posts and negatively correlated to the perceived harms of those posts. Regarding the role of individual ideologies, it was found that hostile sexism, benevolent sexism, just-world belief, and perceived injustice of sexual harassment all moderate the correlation between exposure to GBV self-disclosure stories on Facebook and the perception of GBV self-disclosure stories on Facebook. Similarly, Kunst et al. (2019) found that hostile sexism, benevolent sexism, and rape myth had a positive association with the perceived harm of #MeToo and a negative correlation with the perceived benefits of #MeToo.

Herrera Hernandez and Oswald (2022) also found that benevolent and hostile sexism are positively correlated with sexual harassment acceptance and hostile sexism is negatively correlated with support for the #MeToo movement. On the other hand, benevolent sexism is not correlated with support for #MeToo.

In addition, Menegatti et al. (2022) conducted two separate but related surveys in Italy. The research endeavored to determine the impacts of hostile sexism toward the opposite gender as it relates to the respondent's tolerance of sexual harassment, the perception of the #MeToo movement, and the respondent's potential to engage in a similar collective act in the future. The first study involved only male respondents, which found that men who exhibit a high level of hostile sexism towards women are more likely to believe in the harmful effects of #MeToo and less likely to perceive it as beneficial. Regarding benevolent sexism towards women, it was not correlated with the perceived benefits of #MeToo while it was positively related to the perceived harm. The second study involved only female respondents, which found that women with high levels of benevolent views toward men are less likely to believe that #MeToo was beneficial and more likely to have higher levels of perceived harms regarding #MeToo. Consistently, women with hostile views regarding men are more likely to believe that #MeToo was beneficial and less likely to believe in the harms of the campaign. It was found that although individual identities moderate the correlation between perceived benefits and exposure to GBV self-disclosure stories on Facebook, they do not moderate the correlation between perceived harms and exposure to the GBV self-disclosure stories on Facebook. The identities examined includes those who self-identify as a feminist, attitude towards feminism, group identity, and politicized identity. Similarly, Herrera Hernandez and Oswald (2022) indicated that feminist identity is negatively correlated with the acceptance of sexual harassment, while it is positively correlated with support for #MeToo. Kunst et al. (2019) concluded that feminist identity has a negative association with the perceived harm of #MeToo and a positive correlation with the perceived benefits of #MeToo.

Conversely, Szekeres, Shuman, and Saguy (2020) found that feminist ideology does not moderate a correlation between altering a negative opinion regarding the possibility of a false accusation or the intention to damage the accused men after exposure by #MeToo. Surprisingly, all demographic variables (e.g., gender, education, age, and income) do not affect the correlation between exposure to GBV self-disclosure stories and the perception of those stories. Similarly, Herrera Hernandez and Oswald (2022) stated that gender was not correlated with either support for #MeToo or acceptance of sexual harassment. Conversely, in an experimental study conducted by Acquaviva, O'Neal, and Clevenger (2021) examining the perceived credibility of three sexual violence cases initiated by #MeToo, the researchers found that female participants were more likely to provide justifications to enhance their belief in GBV victims as opposed to male participants. Bruggen and Grubb (2014) reviewed literature on this topic and identified specific characteristics regarding both the victim and observer of rape may affect the perception of the crime, particularly as it pertains to supporting or blaming the victims. Regarding the observers of an incident of rape, they concluded that one of the characteristics that most studies agreed on, in relation to the perception concerning incidents of rape, is gender. More specifically, male observers are more likely to blame the victim for the incident or underestimate the outcome of rape incidents than their female counterparts. Kunst et al. (2019) found that women have a higher rate of identifying as a feminist, lower sexism scores compared to men, and are less likely to believe in the rape myth. Meanwhile, men have less prior sexual harassment experience and consume more pornographic material. Yet, female respondents are more positive toward the #MeToo movement and believe it offers benefits and few potential harms.

However, although some studies have identified a correlation between the rape myth when compared to gender roles beliefs, benevolent sexism, occupation of the observer, and the perception of rape incidents, these findings are less constant. As such, these findings are still uncertain, particularly when compared to the findings related to the gender effect on the perception of incidents of rape.

Conclusion

Overall, survey respondents expressed their belief that sharing personal GBV stories on social media has more benefits than detriments. They strongly condemned all forms of sexual harassment and recognized the severe negative impact it exerts upon victims. Moreover, respondents indicated their belief that people do not always make fair decisions and that the world is not inherently just. Concurrently, while respondents identified strongly with their gender group, they did not consider themselves as self-identified feminists. Nonetheless, respondents support feminist goals, such as gender equality and respect for women, but were skeptical about the effectiveness of online feminism when it pertains to improving the overall situation for women.

The limitation and Recommendations:

One of the limitations in the research was the exclusion of certain questions on the survey questionnaire. Certain questions were excluded due to the length of the questionnaire. Moreover, other questions were removed due to cultural sensitivities to mitigate the potential of a low response rate. Because this study examines the role of many intervening variables in mediating the correlation between exposure to GBV self-disclosing stories and the perception among users exposed to this type of content, other intervening variables were removed that may be considered culturally unacceptable to avoid embarrassing respondents. These intervening variables include,

rape myth and bystander intervention. Further research may consider models for including such intervening variables in their quantitative studies.

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